

September 17, 2003

To: Katharin Kelker , Board Chair  
Pat Gum, Special Education Director  
Leslie Chumrau, Program Coordinator

From: Suzn Gehring, Quality Improvement Specialist  
Developmental Disabilities Program

Subject: Comprehensive Evaluation of Early Childhood Intervention's (ECI) Part C Services

*This review consists of a summary of the information I've collected throughout the year and from the file reviews and home visits I made in August and September 2003. I found very high performance and compliance with the state and federal regulations for Part C services.*

*I really enjoyed meeting the families I was able to visit and seeing ECI's Family Support Specialists (FSSes) work with the families. It was clear to me that the families were comfortable with their FSSes and that there is excellent rapport. Each FSS was respectful of the family and checked to see what the family's wishes were for future services. The randomly chosen families expressed very positive comments about the services they have received, the agency and it's staff. Some of their comments are as follows:*

Services are great! My daughter has increased her skills since being in ECI's program. The ECI staff know how to get her to do things I couldn't get her to do.

It was so great that I got connected with services while we were in the hospital in California. ECI called me while I was still in California. I have felt well supported and taken care of. Services have been really important to us - they helped us get Medicaid and the therapies that my son needs. They did a lot of the foot work for me and set up the Medicaid stipend for us.

I love my FSS, she checks to see if our daughter is meeting her milestones and suggests activities to help her. She helped us get OT and PT every week.

## HOME VISITS/FILE REVIEWS

*During home visits, families demonstrated to me that they understood that they were the primary decision makers in all aspects of this service. They also valued the opinions and insight of their FSS. Families work in collaboration with their FSSes. Families reported that they were treated with respect and information was explained clearly. All families reported that ECI helped in coordination with other agencies.*

*IFSPs were fluid and changing based on the child and family's changing needs and desires. I saw additions and modifications that had been made to the IFSPs. Families reported that confidentiality was maintained and that they could see all records relating to their child.*

*Families understood that Part C services ended when their child turns 3 or when they no longer were in need of services. Families had partial understanding of the differences between Part C and Part B service. Though I see this as an area to continue to work on, the families with younger children tell me this information is not yet important to them.*

*Families reported that the initial home visit occurred very soon after the initial contact with the agency and that services were provided without any gaps. Families all knew that their participation in services was voluntary.*

*All files were complete with documentation of all contacts made with or on behalf of the family. There was documentation showing coordination and cooperation with a variety of other agencies. All children had current IFSPs which contained demographic, assessment summaries and detailed description of the services provided. ECI has a very sophisticated computerized system to assist staff in having complete records. IFSPs were reviewed and revised as required. Invitations to the IFS meeting were sent out 2 weeks in advance. Evidence of providing information about family rights and complaint procedures was always present*

*The school district conducts 9 child finds each year! All children reviewed had documentation of meeting the federal eligibility requirements. A file review of children determined not eligible showed that the assessments used to determine this were multidimensional. I reviewed two files - in one a screening version and the full assessment of the same tool had been used. While I thought there was good reason to use the full version of the same tool in most cases I would prefer to see two different assessments used.*

*I also was able to observe an intake visit and was impressed with how 'naturally' the FSS worked with the child to completed the assessment for eligibility.*

*Initial contact and IFSPs were developed within the federal guidelines or documentation to explain why this was not possible was present. No children were served over the age of 3 with transitioning occurring during the last 90 days of service.*

*FSSes reported caseload sizes above the 1:18 ratio. When fully staffed there are the equivalent of 8.175 full time staff which allows an average ratio of 1 : 17.125 which is below our contacted ratio.*

#### NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

*ECI was again accredited with distinction in May of 2001 for a three year period; this is great to see. Numerous strengths were listed such as the following:*

*Families need for information was met in a timely and comprehensive fashion.  
Fathers are very involved as participants in early interaction activities.  
Every child had attained various developmental milestones that were important to the family.  
Staff were generally aware of natural supports available to families.  
Families knew and exercised their rights.  
Only positive approaches have been used to handle children's behavior.  
ECI strives to be a family-centered service provider.  
Staff are encouraged to learn new things on their own and share this information with others.*

*There were also recommendations to consider some are as follows:*

*Ask families on an ongoing basis what information they need and what questions they have that are still unanswered.  
Ensure staff are asking about natural supports available to families as well as helping families problem solve if needs are present.  
Teach families good conflict resolution skills so that they can most effectively advocate for their child.  
Solicit input from staff and families in budget formation.*

## CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

*The summary of consumer surveys shows excellent parental satisfaction with the services ECI provides. The comments of the families listed are heart warming to read!*

## FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL PARENT REPRESENTATIVE INPUT

*Gerald Pease, the parent representative on this council, relayed that he had not heard any complaints about ECI's services.*

## INTERNAL EVALUATION

*Internal monitoring tracks items such as initial family contacts, meeting the 45 day time line for the completion of the IFS and IFS goal completion. The internal monitoring report show excellence compliance with these initial time lines for services implementation. ECI is setting goals and working to improve the quality of the IFSP. I applaud these efforts of continuous quality improve - another sign of an excellent program.*

## CONTACT DOCUMENTATION

*This item relates to contacts our agency receives from outside sources about ECI. I have only received one contact this year from a family with ECI about what services could be purchased. The family was meeting with ECI to work out how much speech would be paid for by ECI. I ask the family to let me know if they were not able to work this out and did not hear from them again.*

## LICENSING INFORMATION

*This section does not apply as ECI does not do placements. They do work in foster homes with placements made through Family Services.*

## FINANCIAL AUDITS

*An audit has been completed as required. The end of the year financial reports have been submitted on time. In previous years, the desk review revealed that the audit was acceptable, there were no material findings or questionable costs. FY03's desk review has not yet been completed on the financial report received this month. However, your FY03 year end income and expense report revealed a balance of \$100,869 in personnel services*

## FAMILY SUPPORT SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION

*I saw current certifications for all three staff in my sample.*

## CRISIS RESPONSE INFORMATION

*ECI addresses emergency issues with families as they arise. One family I visited has had multiple hospitalizations and surgeries out of state. ECI assisted this family with arranging Medicaid assistance for transportation as well as supplementing food and lodging costs which were not covered by Medicaid.*

## CONCLUSION

*I want to thank the staff for your cooperation and particularly for assisting me in setting up the home visits. I found excellent compliance with the federal requirements for Part C services. Families reported high levels of satisfaction with ECI's services. There continues to be excellent team work amongst staff at ECI as well as with other agencies. As the funding source, I am very pleased with the services ECI delivers to families.*

Copies to      Gary Pagnotta  
                     Judy LeRoux  
                     Tim Plaska

STAFF	HOURS	FTE	1:18 equivalent CASE LOAD SIZE	REPORTED CASE LOAD SIZE	OVER 1:18 RATION
C	28	.7	12.6	12-14	if at 14 it could be over
R	28	.7	12.6	13-15 - now at 16 due to vacancies	yes for now and when at 14 or above
R	36	.9	16.2	18	yes
Totals from contract		7.29	18	19.2	yes
Total from position list	327	8.175	18	17.125	yes